January 9-10, 2007 to extend an invitation from our Prime Minister to Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse for the 14th SAARC Summit to be held in New Delhi in April, 2007. During meetings with the Sri Lankan leadership, we conveyed to the Government of Sri Lanka that the only solution to the ethnic problem is a negotiated, political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka that is acceptable to all sections of the Sri Lankan society. We also expressed concern about any escalation of violence resulting in civilian casualties.

(b) Yes. The Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka visited India on March 19*21, 2007. During the visit, bilateral relations, the peace process in Sri Lanka and SAARC issues were discussed.

(c) No.

(d) All the major ports of the country are already ISPS (International Shipping and Port Facility Security) Code-compiiant. The security level as per this code is raised according to the perceived threat.

Directions on subsidies to Haj pilgrims

2616. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of recent directions of Supreme Court on subsidies given to Haj pilgrims by Government;

(b) whether Saudi Arabia and Pakistan told Government in past that the State subsidy for Haj pilgrims is un-lslamic;

(c) the amount of quota of pilgrims, State-wise, and the amount of subsidy that was given to Haj pilgrims during the last five years from 2001-02 to 2005-06, State wise;

(d) whether the subsidy is given to any other religion/or faiths in the country except islam, and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E.AHAMMED): (a) The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its judgement of 18/09/2006, stayed for 2006 the orders of the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court to the extent they restrained Government of India from providing funds or giving financial subsidies for Haj. Insofar as validity and legality of such financial grant is concerned, the Hon'ble Supreme

Court made it clear that their order shall not, in any manner, be construed as an impediment in the hearing of the writ petition before the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court and the decision of the writ petition on merits, in accordance with law, The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its judgement, requested the High Court to hear and expeditiously decide the writ petition so that the legal position is crystallised, at-least, before Haj of the year 2007. The Government have also received separately notice of the writ petition field in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of the Haj Committee Act, 1959.

(b) As per records available, the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan haye not raised with the Government of India the subject of State subsidy for Haj pilgrims.

(c) The original state-wise quota of pilgrims through the Haj Committee of India during the last five years *i.e.* 2002 to 2006 is enclosed in Statement (See below)

The amount of subsidy that was given for haj pilgrims during the last five years *i.e.* 2002 to 2006 is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Amount of Subsidy Provisional
2002	173.63
2003	172.00
2004	160.70
2005	179.66
2006	280.00

(d) and (e) Government of India provide assistance to the pilgrims going for Kailash Mansarovaralso. A sum of Rs. 3250/- for each pilgrim is paid to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam, the agency on the Indian side authorised for making logistical arrangements for the pilgrims, to partially offset the expenditure incurred by Kimaon Mandal Vikas Nigam.

Statement

State-wise quota of pilgrims through Haj Committee of lndia

States	2002 Original Quota	2003 Original Quota	2004 Original Quota	2005 Original Quota	2006 Original Quota
1	2	3	4	5	6
Andaman & Nicobar	60	60	60	17	21
Andhra Pradesh	3906	3906	3906	4045	4995
Assam	4270	4270	4270	4871	5967
Bihar	(#) 8432	(#) 8432	(#) 8432	7944	9731
Chandigarh	60	60	60	21	25
Chhattisgarh				237	291
Dadar & Nagar Haveli	40	40	40	4	5
Daman Diu	40	40	40	7	9
Delhi	587	587	587	940	1151
Goa	60	60	60	53	65
Gujarat	2378	2378	2378	2659	3257
Haryana	504	504	504	708	867
Himachal Pradesh.	50	50	50	69	85
Jammu & Kashmir	2718	2718	2718	3933	4818
Jharkhand				2160	2646
Karnataka	3451	3451	3451	3742	4584
Kerala	4476	4476	4476	4552	5577
Lakshadweep	121	121	121	33	41
Madhya Pradesh	(*) 2165	(*) 2165	(*) 2165	2224	2724
Maharashtra	5030	5030	5030	5946	7284
Manipur	88	88	88	111	135
Orissa	381	381	381	441	540

Note: (*) Quota of Chhattisgarh included in Madhya Pradesh
(#) Quota of Jharkhand included in Bihar

1	2	3	4	5	6
Pondicherry	60	60	60	34 .	42
Punjab	158	158	158	221	271
Rajasthan	. 2325	2325	2325	2772	3396
Tamil Nadu	2013	2013	2013	2009	2461
Tripura	130	130	130	147	180
Uttar Pradesh	($) 15897	($) 15897	($) 15897	17796	21800
Uttaranchal				586	718
West Bengal	10600	10600	10600	11718	14354
Govt. Quota	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
TOTAL:	72000	72000	72000	82000	100000

NOTE: ($) Quota of Uttaranchal included in Uttar Pradesh.

Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service

2617. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service is not able to cater to all the passengers wanting to go to the other side;

(b) the difficulties in allowing all those who want to go to the other side; and

(c) the steps that are being taken to remove those difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus serivce has adequate capacity to cater to passengers eligible to travel across the LoC on this route.

(b) to (c) Indian passengers who intend to travel to Muzaffarabad must submit their application to the designated authority, which is RPO Srinagar. After due scrutiny to establish the bonafides of the passengers, the applications are forwarded to the Pakistani designated authority. Only those passengers cleared by the Pakistani designated authority can travel to Muzaffarabad. Difficulties arising in the course of the operation of